

**Testimony in Support of SB 122,
AAC Bonds of the State for the Construction of a Community Center and Recreational Facility in
New London**

To the Members of the Committee:

I am writing in support of the New London Community Center. Our children in New London need and deserve a community center.

I facilitated prevention groups in southeastern Connecticut for over 35+ years. Every two years I would facilitate focus groups with the high school students during parenting classes. Their ideas for a New London Community Center still resound in my head. These children have grown up and have children, grandchildren and in some cases great grandchildren and we still do not have a community center in the city. When I see them they ask whatever happened to the idea of a community center. How much longer should they wait?

They envisioned a center that provided services for all aspects of their lives. They talked about the importance of including the teen moms and dads. They felt it was not right to exclude teen parents because, they were still kids. They designed a place that would be safe for all children. A place that the entire community could utilize.

When I found out that our city was finally acting on creating the NL Community Center, I thanked God. No more talking. It is time for action. We are a small community with big needs. Having a community center can bring our children and all of the community closer together. New London is dedicated to keeping its residents safe and healthy. We can accomplish that through a community center.

I am a senior citizen now. I want us to have a place where our seniors can take pride in their center. We need a pool for physical therapy for our residents. At this time our residents must travel to Mystic/Stonington for aqua therapy. Community center staff can evaluate the health and welfare needs of its residents thereby reducing number of emergency situations/needs.

We need the support of the state to help us attain this goal. Please help us create a center that will enhance the quality of life of New London residents and their families and providing equal access to social, recreational and health needs for the young and the old. With your support you can help us to become a focal point of services, information and activities for New London residents.

Respectfully Submitted,

Merrylyn Weaver
New London Resident/Kente Cultural Center co-founder